



# ĀNANDA VĀRTĀ

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*The Eternal, the Ātman—  
Itself pilgrim and path of Immortality.  
Self contained—THAT is all in One.*

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## There is no Bondage

*“Bondage is of the mind and freedom is also of the mind. A man is free if he constantly thinks I am a free soul. How can I be found, whether I live in the world or in the forest? I am a child of God, the king of Kings. Who can bind me?”*

—Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa



*“Total self-giving to Krishna places one above the disputes of the vedantist and the vaishnava. The vedantist says, “I want to be one with the Supreme.” The vaishnava says, “The Supreme is honey. I don’t want to be one with honey — I want to enjoy Honey.”*

*“But it is not a question of what I want or don’t want. It is essentially the question of what Krishna wills. This is Parabhakti.”*

—Yogi Sri Krishnaprem

# SRI SRI MA'S UTTERANCES

(Reported by Sri Gurupriya Devi in "Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi", Vol. VI.

An aged *sādhaka* residing in Vindhyachal wished to know if he should spend his last days at Kashi.

*Mataji*: Do you know what the fact of the matter is? Kashi is within you. Not of everybody can this be said, but for you Kashi is the same as Vindhyachal. Keeping this in mind, you should remain in peace in the place where the effort toward keeping alive the remembrance of God can be maintained. You yourself do not know what it is to be aware of the inner wealth which is already within you. To be in possession of the inner treasure is real richness.

Nobody can guarantee whether the next breath will be drawn. With every incoming and outgoing breath, should one not keep alive the remembrance of that One Supreme Reality? Only the witness who is within may know the extent of inner wealth and prescribe accordingly.

Not that this body always speaks in such clear terms about injunctions, but for you it is being said that Vindhyachal is equal to Kashi.

[*Mataji's* words seem to suggest that a *sādhaka* may attain a state when he does not need to distinguish one place of *sādhanā* from another. He may attain the goal independently of the spiritual aura pertaining to a particular holy site. *Mataji* emphasizes that this teaching is not meant for every-

body. In general holy sites are to be preferred for *sādhanā*. Of course Vi ndhyachal is also a special place of pilgrimage.]

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*Question* : Is it really necessary to make contact with a Guru ?

*Mataji* : Yes. There can be no progress without some support.

*Question* : How can one recognize a Sadguru ?

*Mataji* : To tell the truth, is it possible for students to recognize their teacher ? This is why some are of the opinion that a person who wishes to choose a Guru should be in close contact with him for one year before making up his mind. But even this, is it enough to recognize a Sadguru ?

There is another aspect to this question : Whatever is learnt from any source, know that to be ordained as such. Events sometimes so arrange themselves that a temporary relationship is established between teacher and pupil. It may happen that a disciple no longer wishes to remain under the tutelage of his guru. However, it must be understood that the disciple did receive what he was meant to receive through this temporary relationship.

Just as for example, you take a cab to the railway station. On arrival there you dismiss the cab and board the train. But don't forget that only with the help of the cab you could catch the train. Another example : A pupil first studies at a primary school. This awakens the desire in him to study further and so he proceeds to a higher secondary school and then on to a college. Thus

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no stage is irrelevant or negligible. They are all equally important and indispensable in their own places. Truly the Sadguru Himself inspires the disciple to go through the stages of seeking. It is the very nature of the World-teacher to shower His grace on all. In the ultimate analysis Guru, mantra and *Ista* are one.

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“A man who is looking for anything but God and the salvation of his soul will find nothing but sorrow and distress ; neither can anyone long remain in peace, unless he is striving to be the least, subject to everyone else. You came to serve and not to rule. Understand that you were called to suffer and to work, not to waste time and to gossip.

“Here men are put to the test like *gold tried in the crucible*. Here no one can last unless he is prepared wholeheartedly to humble himself for God.”

—*The Imitation of Christ*

# MĀTRI SATSANG

Swami Bhagavatananda Giri

(Translated from Bengali)

*(Continued from the last issue)*

*Rishikesh, April 18th, 1959*

*Question* : Ma, about whom do you think when you shut your eyes ?

*Mataji* : What I do with open eyes, exactly the same I do with my eyes shut.

*Question* : Please explain, so that we may understand what you are doing.

*Mataji* : To understand is useless, for to understand means to stand under a new load.\* Have you understood, Babā ?

*Questioner* : No, I have not !

*Mataji* : It is of course the "I" that does not understand.

*Questioner* : I am such a well-known doctor, yet I have failed in your test.

*Mataji* : The doctor for dealing with Supreme Truth is different.—Whether my eyes are closed or open, it is all the same. I am speaking the complete truth. Sitting on the bank of the Ganges I do not tell lies.

*Question* : Whom do you contemplate ?

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\* A play upon words : *bojha* means to understand and also load or burden.



*Mataji* : At the time of meditation I do exactly what I am doing now. The question of contemplating someone does not arise : the Self reposes within Itself. There—where is a second ? It is duality that breeds sorrow, fear and conflict.

*Question* : Some of the Mahātmās speak on very lofty subjects, but at the slightest provocation get angry.

*Mataji* : Wholeheartedly put up with all this. You have come here to be at peace and keep quiet.

*Question* : Why have we come here ?

*Mataji* : We have come here so that the stream of true Knowledge (*Jñāna Ganga*) may manifest.

*Questioner* : Please, ask everybody here why they have come.

*Mataji* : They have come to practise *Samyam*.

*Questioner* : They have come because you have called them. By performing meditation and other spiritual exercises in your presence power is gained, this is why they are here.

*Mataji* : They gain their own power.

*Question* : We should all become like Rishikesh. How can this be done ?

*Mataji* : Rishikesh is within you. This is why you have come here. Everything is in fact present within you.

*Question* : What *darśanas* have you had to-day ? Please tell us !

*Mataji* : During silent meditation I saw someone standing dressed in white. Another person was seated. Perhaps they had come to participate in the silence.

*Question* : Do they also derive benefit from the *mouna* ?  
Who are they ?

*Mataji* : It is they who are present in each of these forms.

*Question* : Then why did they come in two different forms ?

*Mataji* : Why have you come here in so many forms ?

*Question* : Were they Guru and disciple ?

*Mataji* : No.

*Question* : I saw pigeons flying about during silent meditation.

*Mataji* : Did you see the pigeons after the meditation ? Then your meditation was successful. Father used to say that in the christian religion pigeons or doves are considered to be the emblem of peace.

*Question* : A snake had entered Ma's room. Was it a Mahātmā in the guise of a snake ?

*Mataji* : Yes, sometimes they do come in this guise.

*Question* : During meditation, between 3-22 and 3-25 p.m. I felt very hot. I opened my eyes and saw a mahātmā in white robes, with white hair, sitting by the side of Ma. You were in meditation but the mahātmā was speaking. Later he disappeared. I saw this with these very eyes. Afterwards I beheld Haribabaji.

*Mataji* : You have seen very well. Continue with your devotional practices and the vision for *darśana* will open up.

*Question* : Who came in the guise of doves ?

*Mataji* : So many come in various forms. Some may also come and conceal their identity.

*Question* : Who was the superman in white robes ?

*Mataji* : One of your own innumerable forms. Each form is your own, is it not ? In order that your own Reality (*svarūpa*) may be revealed, the observance of *samyam* is imperative.

*Question* : When these visions take place, why do they last for such a short while only ?

*Mataji* : Visions occur in accordance with the state that has been attained.

*Question* : Do visions come when the eyes are open or shut ?

*Mataji* : They may take place while the eyes are open and also while they are shut.

*Question* : There must surely be some special kind of eyes to perceive all this ?

*Mataji* : Those eyes are called eyes of inner knowledge (*jñāna chakshu*)—the eyes that never undergo any change. For the sake of obtaining those eyes one must observe *samyam*. By the sustained practice of self-restraint (*samyam*) your true eyes will be opened.

*Question* : But these special eyes of inner knowledge have to be granted, have they not ?

*Mataji* : Why granted ? They are in fact within you. Only the covering screen has to be removed.

*Questioner* : In the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna said to Arjun : “*Divyām dadāmi te chakṣu*” (The divine eye I give to thee !) So please remove the veil of ignorance !

*Mataji* : It is true that the Lord granted Arjuna divine sight ; but why did Arjuna get frightened ? He became afraid because although special eyes had been granted to him, he was not yet fit for them. Had the eyes of true knowledge really manifested Arjuna would not have been riddled with fear. Who feels afraid and what does one fear ? Had those special eyes led to the revelation of his true Self, he could not have harboured any fear. To obtain true knowledge of the Self is to realize God and to realize God means realizing one's true Self.

*Question* : Having had the vision of God, will liberation be attained in this very life ?

*Mataji* : To realize one's own Self does indeed mean liberation.

*Question* : What has been the benefit of attending this week of *samyam* ? I have not gained anything.

*Mataji* : Don't behave like a shop-keeper or business-man !

*Question* : I do not seem to have made any progress in my *sādhana*. What am I to do ?

*Mataji* : *Samyam* must be observed for its own sake ; do not worry about what you have gained or not gained. God is the very life of our lives, live a life of self-mastery in order to realize Him !

*Questioner* : I feel deep within myself that I have not made any progress.

*Mataji* : Without becoming desperately eager nothing can be obtained. Just as, when someone is about to be drowned, he tries with all his might

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to gain the shore, of such intense eagerness must you be possessed to realize God.

*Question* : How can this intense eagerness be acquired ?

*Mataji* : Continue to seek satsang and to practise meditation, *japa* etc. If you feel you are not getting anywhere, this is not a bad sign in itself, namely the feeling, I have engaged in so many devotional practices, yet I do not seem to have gained anything substantial. But never think of relaxing your efforts ! It is not right to look for results. "To contemplate God is my bounden duty." If for any reason you have not been able to do so, you should feel deeply distressed.

Some people complain : "So and so has got a very good job, why can't I get a similar one ? What can be the reason ?" You are not qualified for it. You have not reached the competence that makes you fit for the job. According to one's capacity one receives. God is not merciless, He is full of grace, the ocean of compassion. When you are ready for it, He will most certainly give you *darśana*.

Just as a mother does not provide the same kind of food for every one of her children. She may give the eldest fried rice and the youngest only milk. To accuse the mother of partiality would surely not be right. Similarly God never shows partiality. A mother thinks carefully before she gives. The mother-cow cleanses her calf by licking up all the dirt. So does God swallow our pride, passion, anger, and so forth. Sometimes he teaches

us a lesson by a thorough shaking or by giving us a slap.

Mahātmās declare that the whole universe is God's empire, everything belongs to Him only. Therefore never look upon anything as your own. Where the sense of "I" and "mine" is, there indeed is death. While by looking at everything as God's very own, death is conquered, "*Merā, merā*" ("mine, mine") means "*marā, marā*" (to die).\*

*April 19th, 1959.*

To-day at about 4 p.m., after the collective meditation a very strange incident took place. Arundā† had gone to bathe in the Ganga. After his bath he noticed that he had lost the key to his room. Being a very old man, he became very nervous. He searched all over the place, but in vain. So in sheer desperation he sat down on a rock and started praying to Ma. There was nobody to be seen anywhere near. He felt utterly helpless. Suddenly he saw a hill-woman dressed in a fine sari, with sandals on her feet, coming towards him. She asked Arunda : "What has happened ?" When he replied that his key was lost, the woman went near the Ganga and without any seeming effort picked up the key from somewhere and handed it to Arunda, who said : "Ma, many thanks to you !" She retorted : "You are calling me "Ma" and giving me thanks as well ?"

The key was covered with mud, so he started washing it. When it was clean he looked up—nobody was to be seen ! On returning to his room he started pondering over the fact that he had got his earthly key returned to him after crying for it so vehemently, but when and how shall we find the key to our lives that we have lost ?

\* A play upon words : *merā* mine, and "*marā*" to die.

† Arun Prakash Banerjee, an old devotee.

*Mataji* : Here in Rishikesh you are observing *samyam* on the bank of Ganga. This is the proper place for you to obtain the key to your life. By practising japa and meditation here on the bank of Ganga there is hope of discovering the real key.

*Question* : Does one become transformed by *darśana* ?

*Mataji* : He could not recognize whom he saw. So was this a genuine *darśana* ? Whatever it was that he beheld, so much for the good. As a result he at least started pondering how to find the real key—this was the direct benefit. He beheld someone who later disappeared. Why did the thought of how to acquire the real key enter his mind at that very moment ?

*Question* : Ma, who was that woman ?

*Mataji* : Ganga Devi ( goddess Ganga ) bestowed her grace.

*Question* : He had *darśana* over an ordinary room-key, so why does one not obtain *darśana* for gaining the real key to one's life ?

*Mataji* : Who is keen to have *darśana* ? When the yearning for it becomes profound, *darśana* will most certainly take place.

Arunda then related a dream of his. In this connection a devotee asked : Ma, are dreams something real ?

*Mataji* : That you are here, is it not a dream as well ? The dream of the waking-state.

*Question* : What is the necessity of entering the state of dreaming ?

*Mataji* : Why does one enter this dream of the waking state ?

*Question* : Was losing the key then a dream ?

*Mataji* : Does one dream while one is walking ? If waking is a dream then what you say is also a dream.

*Question* : So, until one realizes one's essential Being everything is a dream. In this condition, can there be *darśana* of the supernormal beyond the range of imagination ?

*Mataji* : If he had already had true *darśana*, why should he continue to search ? This was a dream within a dream. There are infinite varieties of dreams. The fact that we are sitting here on the bank of Ganga, all this is within the dream of waking. All these things here are imaginary and therefore perishable. Whatever you see around you is subject to constant change, nothing at all will remain. In this world inhabited by living beings (*jīva-jagat*) everything is doomed to perish.

*Question* : Does Mother Ganga visit a meeting like this ?

*Mataji* : The real Ganga is *Jñāna Ganga* (the Ganga of Knowledge) which washes everything clean. Leading a life of *samyam*, meditation, japa, satsang, etc. are also a kind of fetter but this bondage has for its purpose the shaking off of all shackles. What really matters is to become obsessed with the longing to contemplate God.

People find it very tasteful to listen to stories and to gossip. They spend hour after hour at cinemas and other entertainments. But how much time is devoted to God ? One must sit perfectly still during meditation and japa. So long as the posture does not become fixed correct japa and meditation cannot come about.



# SOME TYPICAL DIALOGUES WITH SRI MA

Anil Ganguli

*(Continued from the last issue)*

## On Suffering

Misfortune is a problem which baffles many. Misfortune — for instance in the history of peoples or in the lives of families and individuals, seemingly senseless destruction — how are these facts compatible with the idea of a God, whom we should like, not only to fear but also to love? With reference to a question somewhat like this, one day Ma had a dialogue with Melita Maschmann, the gist of which is given below :—

*Ma* : Do you believe that God is the Creator of this world and therefore its Lord ?

*Questioner* : Let us anyway in our discussion take this for granted.

*Ma* : Very well. If God is the Lord of the world, He can do with it as He pleases. Suppose you have grown beautiful flowers in your garden, but decide to plant fruit-trees their in place, would'nt you have to remove the flowers ? If you have a fine house, but wish to build a larger and better one on the same plot, you will be obliged to demolish the old one. The freedom that is yours in small things, God exercises in great ones. In both is He, in destruction as well as in construction. The

history of nations, families and individuals is the great *līlā* that He stages with Himself.

*Questioner* : What about evil in the world ?

*Ma* : When you have realized God, then good and evil do not exist for you anymore.

*Questioner* : Do you mean to say that I should refrain from fighting the evil in my surroundings ?

*Ma* : Serve human beings as much as you can ; but do not identify yourself with their wants and needs. You must go beyond all this and seek God.

*Questioner* : Where does the source of evil lie ? If *Brahman* is all in all, as Hinduism teaches, then evil must also derive from Him and occur with Him.

*Ma* : Good and evil are distinctions that arise in human thought and experience. Only when entering the world of duality we begin to distinguish between good and evil.\*

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### For the spiritually advanced

Referring to Pandit Sunderlal's statement that Mataji was immersed in *samādhi* Mahāmahopadhyāya Gopinath Kaviraj once remarked that *samādhi* signified the mind's absorption and the consequent abeyance of all its activities (*nirodha*) but so far as Ma was concerned, there was no question of mind or overmind and therefore one could not either speak of *samādhi*. Thereupon Ma observed :—

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\*From the Diary of a European by Melita Maschmann—  
*Ananda Varta* XIII/3/94.

*Ma* : Look, just as this body is seen in various attitudes, such a laughing, speaking, moving about, etc., so you may, from your angle of vision also perceive this body in the postures of *samādhi*. In concord with the rhythm of the breath it assumes various postures or attitudes. Change or changelessness, concentration or abeyance of activity — there is simply no question of all these.

After a short pause, *Ma* spoke again :—

“Baba, here everything is perfectly open and unconditioned. But ordinarily the rhythm of the life-force depends on one thing in the field of *sādhanā* and on a different one in the field of worldly life. From the worldly point of view one thinks : ‘my home, my wife, my son, my enemy, my friend’. Thus the idea of the ‘I’ conditions the rhythm of the life-force. Whereas in the field of *sādhanā* it is conditioned by the aspiration towards Realization. The *sādhaka* is ever concentrated on his goal and, therefore, while advancing, he is not aware of the details of the path. If he could once reach the goal, he would be in a position to describe the path, for then everything becomes illumined by the one Light. *Baba*, in reality there is only One Thing. The path, the aim — call it what you will — nothing whatsoever is apart from the Self.\*

### For beginners

It is by no means easy to understand *samādhi* or “illumination by the one Light” mentioned by

\* *Ananda Varta*, Vol. XI, No. 1, p. 37,

Ma in the dialogue with the Mahāmahopadhyāya nor to appreciate her mystical experience disclosed to him. But Ma's answers to a beginner's question are generally clear and simple. Thus, a student had been confused by two apparently self-contradictory propositions in the *Gītā*. Ma removed his difficulty and incidentally explained certain general principles for the guidance of all students of the *Gītā*.

*Questioner* : At one place in the Gita we are asked to engage in karma, or perform ceremonial rites, and at another place to give up karma. How are we to reconcile these two contradictory injunctions ?

*Ma* : Judge for yourself at what stage you are, when to practise sacrificial rites and when to give them up, throwing yourself wholly onto His mercy. These are stages with their appropriate duties and responsibilities. If you are asked to rely absolutely upon Him, is it possible for you to do it all at once ? You have to train your mind and body by constant practice and to purify yourself by spiritual exercises. Read the *Gītā* every day. You will find God revealing Himself through His words recorded therein. A doubt may arise in your mind 'How can words reveal Him ?' You know the book containing the text of the *Gītā* has to be worshipped. By book is meant His words and their import. As you continue to practise day after day, you will gradually reach a stage when absolute reliance on God will be your final achievement ; there is nothing higher than that.

This body tells you again — read the *Gītā* every day and do some spiritual exercise, you will find answers to your queries revealing themselves to your mind. If your desire to know Him is sincere and earnest and comes from the heart, the solution must come. It is inevitable. Without concentration on one aim, without *ekāgratā* (single-mindedness) no real result can be achieved. Our mind is the swiftest thing in creation. Let the mind move at its own speed constantly towards the One Aim, which is God. He will reveal Himself. As long as He is not revealed through His words in the *Gītā*, never give up the practice of reading sacred texts.\*

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Again, in answer to questions asked by a Professor at Ranchi, presumably for the benefit of his pupils, Ma uttered, in simple language, some eternal truths in a homely manner appealing to all.

*Questioner* : What actually is 'ānandamayī' ?

*Ma* : "You yourself are 'ānandamayī' (permeated by Bliss)."

*Questioner* : Well, then our relation with that aspect of ourselves has so far not been consciously established !

*Ma* : The relationship that is eternal exists here and now. There is only One Self.

*Questioner* : Yet we are not aware of it.

*Ma* : This is why effort is necessary. The false idea that your Self is far away is the cause of your misery and of the ceaseless round of births and

\*Ananda Varta 1/4/199.

deaths. It is, therefore, important to take refuge in the Guru and endeavour to become possessed of supreme knowledge. This knowledge will come to you if you keenly aspire after it. Relationship means, the One reposing in Himself is ever bound up with each and all. In the various relationships such as those of mother, father, Lord, friend and so forth, the One is united with each. You also are ever and eternally united with the One. In order to realise Him you have to study, exert yourself and engage in spiritual practices. The great is contained in the small and the small in the great ; the drop in the ocean and the ocean in the drop.\*

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Simple-minded beginners, sincerely eager to learn, sometimes ask Ma elementary questions. Ma patiently listens to them with an encouraging smile and gives clear-cut answers in simple words. But questions not prompted by depth of feeling or lightly asked just for the sake of asking questions, have every chance of being treated on a different footing. Here are a few instances :—

*A German* : What is the difference between prayer and meditation ?

*Ma* : When praying, one asks for the fulfilment of one's desire, even though it be the desire to become one with God or to serve Him or realize Him ; whereas meditation (*dhyāna*) means to be absorbed in the contemplation of Him. In this there is no room for desire.

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\*Ananda Varta

*Questioner* : How can one attain to such meditation ?

*Ma* : It comes spontaneously. At first you remember Him and ponder over Him and then contemplation sets in of itself. While sitting here the remembrance, the thought of your home and children comes to you, unasked and you cannot help pondering over them. By *sāadhanā* the contemplation of the Beloved comes naturally, of its own accord.\*

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Here are Ma's answers to some questions which are as European as Indian :—

*A German Lady* : Again and again it occurs to me that I should stop praying altogether. Whether intentionally or not, our prayer usually becomes a petition. Does this not amount to some kind of interference with God's Will ?

*Ma* : You should pray, in fact you can never pray enough. And you may also ask for something, but ask only for God Himself, for His advent. When the time comes for you to cease from praying, you will stop of your own accord. Then the question whether you should pray or not will not arise anymore.†

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*Questioner* : How can our minds be free for prayer and meditation when we are so much burdened with various kinds of work, including

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\* *Ananda Varta* X/1/33.

† *Ananda Varta* XII/3/92

domestic duties? What should we do in that case?

*Ma*: Let the work be done mechanically without your exertion. Work without the feeling that it is you who are working. Take it as if it is God's work, done through you as His instrument. Then your mind will be at rest and at peace. This is prayer and meditation.

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*A Punjabi lady*: I do *japa* regularly, but my mind does not become still.

*Ma*: All the same you must not give up the attempt.

*Questioner*: My children are so noisy; not always, it is true, but no sooner have I sat down for my *pūjā* than, without fail, they get quite uproarious.

*Ma* (with a smile): Suppose you stand by the seashore wishing to go into the water, can you wait until all the waves have subsided?

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### For non-Hindus

*Ma's* dialogues with non-Hindus are based on fundamental truths acceptable to all. They bear the stamp of her catholicity. Her advice encourages everyone to be constant to his own faith and imperceptibly assists every spiritual aspirant in his onward march along the path suitable for him.

*An American lady*: Mother, I want initiation from you.

*Ma*: What faith do you profess?



